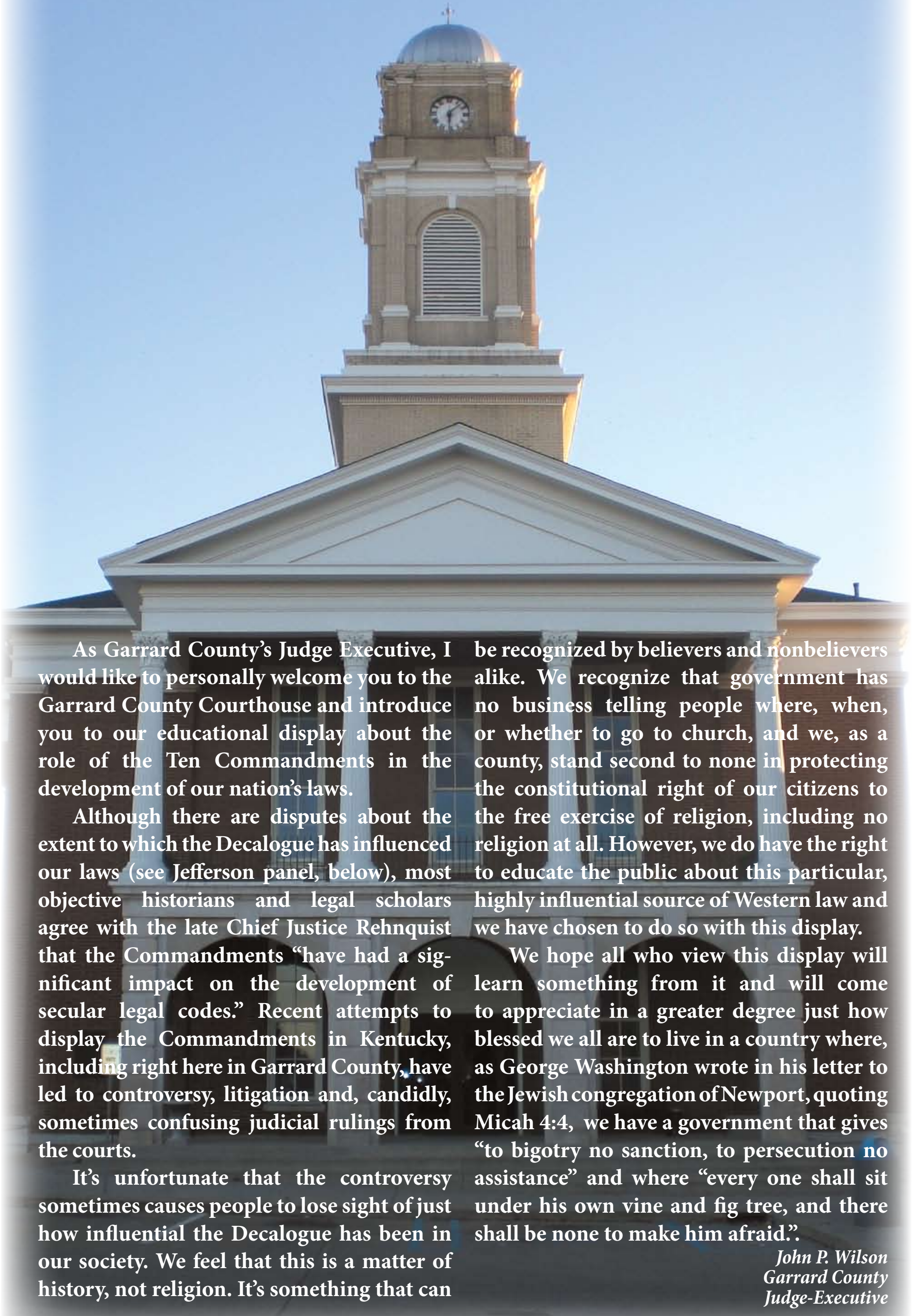


Welcome Courthouse Visitor



As Garrard County's Judge Executive, I would like to personally welcome you to the Garrard County Courthouse and introduce you to our educational display about the role of the Ten Commandments in the development of our nation's laws.

Although there are disputes about the extent to which the Decalogue has influenced our laws (see Jefferson panel, below), most objective historians and legal scholars agree with the late Chief Justice Rehnquist that the Commandments "have had a significant impact on the development of secular legal codes." Recent attempts to display the Commandments in Kentucky, including right here in Garrard County, have led to controversy, litigation and, candidly, sometimes confusing judicial rulings from the courts.

It's unfortunate that the controversy sometimes causes people to lose sight of just how influential the Decalogue has been in our society. We feel that this is a matter of history, not religion. It's something that can

be recognized by believers and nonbelievers alike. We recognize that government has no business telling people where, when, or whether to go to church, and we, as a county, stand second to none in protecting the constitutional right of our citizens to the free exercise of religion, including no religion at all. However, we do have the right to educate the public about this particular, highly influential source of Western law and we have chosen to do so with this display.

We hope all who view this display will learn something from it and will come to appreciate in a greater degree just how blessed we all are to live in a country where, as George Washington wrote in his letter to the Jewish congregation of Newport, quoting Micah 4:4, we have a government that gives "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance" and where "every one shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."

*John P. Wilson
Garrard County
Judge-Executive*